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BACTERIA AS AN ANNIHILATION WEAPON

While the rest of the world is busy on the problem of the new superbomb, the Russians are quietly making frantic preparations for possible bacteriological warfare. A well-known German chemist and bacteriologist spent 5 years at the Soviet research laboratories at Dzerzhinsk. Recently, he succeeded in escaping to the West. In an interview with our correspondents he gives an account of the work of Soviet war industry, in which he, like many other German chemists, was forced to work against his will.

In addition to the considerable development of their industrial plants, the Russians are coldbloodedly working on the creation of the most frightful weapons. All of these operations, whether they consist of the tremendous reforestation projects in the Khar'kov area, the construction of new jet bombers, or the creating of new chemical and bacteriological weapons, are governed only by one supreme law: to make the USSR strong enough to live. The fact that such weapons are being developed in a laboratory in a western country, and the fact that the Russians are attacking such problems, are two altogether different things, for the Russians have much fewer qualms about employing these weapons.

In addition to the well-known armament centers of Moscow, Gor'kiy, Sverdlovsk, and on the Karelian coast, the USSR is maintaining four bacteriological research institutes: near Gor'kiy, at Dzerzhinsk, near Baku, and at Omsk. These research institutes are working on experiments and the production of bacteriological weapons.

The different geographical locations of these institutions can be ascribed to the fact that the bacteria cultures are tested for their suitability under the most varied climatic conditions, and should be suited for the production of corresponding preparations. The work of the bacteriologists, doctors, and chemists, who are of all nationalities, including German, is chiefly concerned with the psittacosis virus, diphtheria toxins, smallpox, cholera, typhus, and pneumonic plague bacilli, in addition to the common bacillus pestis. A complex

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organization sees to it that scientific discoveries of particular importance are made known to all interested workers in bulletins in their own language. The reports and bulletins on research carried out in the Western countries, which are received through news channels, are carefully scrutinized. The German research personnel is provided with the most modern scientific equipment.

In a loop of the Oka River, not far from Gor'kiy, is located the Dzerzhinsk Chemical Works, a complex covering several square kilometers, and consisting of various plants within a heavily guarded enclosure (see appended sketch). This installation produces almost everything from poison gas to artificial fertilizer, from chlorine to plexiglass. In addition, the partially dismantled Leuna Works from Soviet Zone Germany is being rebuilt here. The main laboratory of the huge plant has half a wing of its building reserved for chemical warfare. Conversation between the researchers is kept to a minimum by sentries posted in front of every room. Lodging and food are good. The latter can be supplemented from the works canteen, although at staggering prices. Professor Danielov is the chief of this laboratory, which employs particularly German experts. Danielov studied in Germany for a long time and speaks excellent German.

If we consider the fact that the Russians have succeeded in producing preparations like botulin, a poisonous extract of Gärtner's bacillus, and Clostridium botulinum, 100 grams of which are theoretically sufficient to wipe out 2 billion men; or concentrated diphtheria toxin, 100 grams of which are sufficient to kill approximately 15 million men; or psittacosis virus, 5 cubic centimeters of which can kill 20 million men, the horror of these weapons becomes obvious.

In the spring of 1946, the Russians approached the Germans with a special project. They were given the task of isolating botulin from Gärtner's bacillus and Clostridium botulinum. This preparation was to be in a concentrated form so that a few cubic centimeters would suffice to kill all mankind. The Germans were also instructed to develop an antitoxin from rat strains, to be used as serum.

In view of this gruesome task, the German chemists worked leisurely and wasted time with experiments. The Russians waited patiently. Nothing happened for over a year. Then an NKVD captain appeared and stated: "Gentlemen, you are saboteurs. I have reports according to which the Americans have already developed an antitoxin. I need not tell you that such substances may eventually be employed against imperialist aggressors of the Soviet Union. We must therefore protect ourselves against countermeasures." He demanded emphatically, and unmistakably that he be shown better results on his next visit.

The researchers went to work in frantic haste. They had no success. Then they were transferred to Yevpatoriya on the Black Sea. There, all 70 employees of the laboratory had been killed by plague and psittacosis within a few hours. The Germans had to work in that very building. What happened here would make the blood of anyone with a conscience run cold. Such minor things as botulin were not on the agenda. The problems to be solved were concerned with plague, psittacosis, anthrax, diphtheria, blackwater fever, and others.

The Russians were very well informed about the results of foreign research. They laughed about the Japanese experiments on the spreading of plague, and smiled over the work done by the Americans. The chief of the laboratory, Alya Voronin, was far away in Kamchatka where he performed experiments on live subjects.

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Voronin thought up one of the most diabolical plans for infecting the Western enemy. Work is being carried out at Omsk on the production of bacterial preparations and suitable packing material for loading them into rockets. The rockets which have been built for this purpose can be set in such a way that they will discharge a definite aerosol above a definite point, so that one single rocket can contaminate whole areas along its line of flight.

The belief that the Russians will be restrained from using these weapons for fear of retaliation is unfortunately not valid. One has only to look at the population density of the Western countries as compared to that of the Soviet Union to realize that the Soviet's wide spaces offer a certain protection against bacteriological attacks, while the densely populated areas of the eventual enemies of the USSR allow no escape.

Nevertheless, the Russians are taking every precaution. The training of physicians has become almost an industry in the USSR, and training to combat epidemics takes up a considerable part of the training. The Soviet physician does not study in our sense of the word, he is trained for a definite task. Since, contrary to all other countries, the state instead of the student defrays the expenses of studying, there are no obstacles to the possibilities of training. Thus, in case of an attack on the USSR with bacteriological weapons, the Russians can immediately mobilize special formations consisting of personnel trained for this definite purpose. All these are signs that the USSR is preparing for a future bacteriological war.

The Russians do not stop with experiments in the laboratory and on animals. Plague bacillus carried by rat fleas, and psittacosis virus carried by wrens, are used on human beings and the effects are studied. In the steppes between Lake Aral and Lake Balkhash and in the wastes of Kamchatka, there are camps which contain enough human material for such experiments. Here, too, the end justifies the means, and of the many thousands of dead, according to the findings of the International Red Cross, victims of epidemics, a good number probably did not die a natural death. It makes no difference whatsoever to the Russians whether the victims are their fellow countrymen, or shanghaied Germans, or Japanese prisoners of war. There are no crosses or tombstones to tell where their remains lie.

Not only are the Russians working hard in the field of bacteriology, but their chemical industry is also running full blast. It is absolutely true that the Russians are able to freeze bodies of water extending over several square kilometers within a few hours. By varying the chemicals used, they are able to produce at will either a smooth surface of ice (even on flowing water) or an ice field which resembles a jagged mountainous area. They have already tested this weapon, and in case of actual use, they would proceed according to definite directives. If it is a matter of moving supplies or troops across large bodies of water or rivers, they will choose the smooth ice. Within a short time, there will be a "bridge of ice" on which the supplies can move without difficulty. However, if the crossing of a body of water is to be forces, e.g., in a river valley affording good observation for the enemy, the mountains of ice will protect their troops from view and fire to a great extent. Icing bombs dropped over an enemy harbor can paralyze all shipping, and the bombing squadrons which follow will have an easy job. No ship can escape.

The creation of the weird tidal wave which has been seen by Professor Tellmann, is worked out on the same basis. It is based on the use of chemicals which turn into gases within a fraction of a second when they come in contact with the hydrogen of the water. The gases are liberated at a precisely calculated depth. Due to the difference in specific gravity, an almost undispersed gas bubble forces its way to the water surface, thus creating a tidal wave which no ship can withstand.

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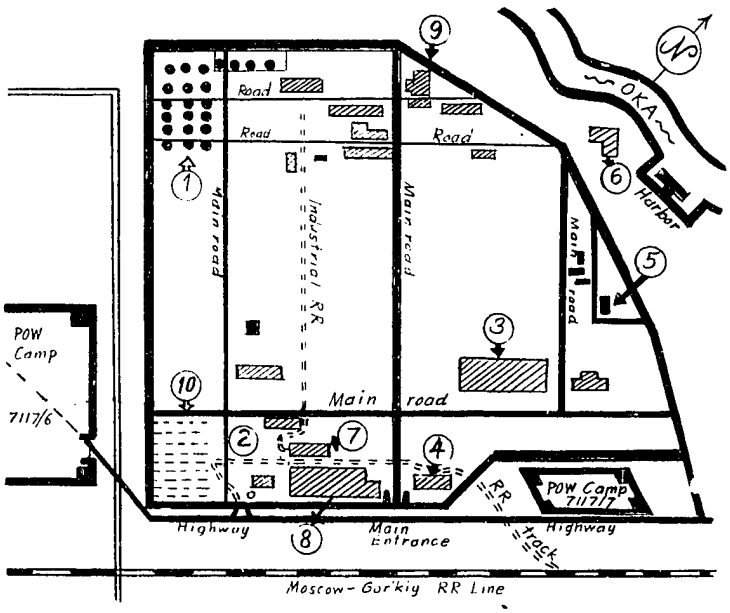
The scientific personnel of the Dzerzhinsk laboratories consists of engineers, chemists, bacteriologists, and doctors of all nationalities. They are subdivided into "voluntary contract employees" (Finns, Swedes, Japanese, members of the Satellite countries), and into compulsory employees. With the exception of the Japanese and the Germans, the voluntary contract employees have complete freedom of movement. The Germans and Japanese may move about only within a radius of 30 kilometers. In addition to the cordon of sentries around the main plant of the Soviet bacteriological installation at Dzerzhinsk, which is about 5 kilometers long and 3 kilometers wide, there are sentries in front of every building outside the fence.

The USSR spends at least 10 billion rubles per year above the official budget creating the weapons described above. This figure was quoted by Professor Danielov, chief of the Dzerzhinsk plant.

Any speculations that the Russians would have enough good sense not to use these weapons, because they might boomerang, are risky; because "good sense" does not mean the same thing to a Russian as it does to a Western European or to an American.



The huge complex of the Dzerzhinsk plant lies on the Moscow-Gor'kiy railroad line. The POW camp 7117/6 and a branch camp 7117/7 are within the guarded area. (1) Large tank farm. (2) The small building is occupied by scientists working on gas analysis. (3) Rectangular experimental basin in which icing experiments are constantly being carried out. (4) To the right of the main entrance, one of the most gruesome places, the bacterial experimental barracks. (5) Secluded camp, housing the German research personnel. (6) Plexiglass plant with very modern equipment. (7) Underground factory, extending underneath the industrial railroad, also used for bacterial experiments. In addition to the cordon of guards around the entire plant, this plant is guarded by specially trained sentries. (8) Large complex, known as "Plant 33," where the dismantled Leuna Works is being rebuilt. (9) "Plant 11." (10) Railroad sidings with filling stations from the tank farm.

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